

Maryland Conservation Jobs Corps

2015

Annual Report



About Us:

The Maryland Conservation Jobs Corps (CJC) is a six-week summer employment program for youth ages 14-17. In summer 2015 the program operated on a five-week schedule due to an elongated school-year for make-up snow days. Operated by the Maryland Park Service, CJC aims to provide a wide array of job and life skills training, while engaging youth in conservation service projects that restore Maryland State Parks and other public lands. CJC combines outdoor experiential activities and the power of nature to challenge and enrich the lives of youth while preparing them for future success in the workforce.

CJC began in 2008, as a special initiative of the Maryland Park Service, and today operates in seven parks including: Assateague State Park, Gunpowder Falls State Park, Gwynns Falls Trail, Lake Clifton Park, Merkle Wildlife Sanctuary, Patapsco Valley State Park, Seneca Creek State Park, and Susquehanna State Park.

The youth, known as Corps Members (age 14 – 17), report to work five days a week and engage in habitat and facility restoration projects at these parks, as well as in nearby city or county parks. CJC youth learn the necessary skills to remove invasive species, maintain trails, plant native species of trees and plants, construct structures, and maintain historic sites. Not only do these skills provide youth with valuable work experience needed for today's job market, but also provides youth with confidence and teamwork skills. The opportunities provided by the Maryland Conservation Jobs Corps may open youth to new possibilities, including higher education, technical school, or "green jobs" which they may have never previously considered.

The Maryland Conservation Jobs Corps has created both a mission and a set of goals which serve as the foundation of the program. On a daily basis, CJC aspires to achieve the following:

Mission:

To provide disadvantaged youth with opportunities for skills training, empowerment, and employment and to restore natural and recreational resources in Maryland State Parks, public lands in general, and the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries.



"Every particular in nature, a leaf, a drop, a crystal, a moment of time is related to the whole, and partakes of the perfection of the whole."

-Ralph Waldo Emerson

Goals:

1. Teach job skills and life skills through conservation service.

CJC members learn basic carpentry, landscaping, painting, and other technical skills as they complete restoration projects. They also learn how to use power tools and other equipment. Youth learn fundamental employment skills and principles, such as team work, conflict resolution, and respect for self and others.

2. Restore natural and cultural resources in Maryland State Parks and other public lands.

Youth learn how to plan and measure projects as they build footbridges and pole sheds, build concrete forms and pour concrete, plant trees and read landscape blueprints, identify and eradicate non-native invasive plants, construct rain gardens, re-roof a nature center, lay patio stone for a garden courtyard, and more.

3. *Develop environmental citizenship through the introduction and application of environmental stewardship principles.*

Understanding how soil erosion, trash, and other pollution affect the water quality of the Chesapeake Bay and the many benefits of planting a tree, as well as understanding how we are all connected to that outcome – these are a few examples of some of the key concepts learned through member participation.

When youth can see the consequences of irresponsible actions or unwise practices on the environment, we are one step closer to keeping them engaged as active advocates for healthy communities when they become adults.

4. *Build personal connections to nature through outdoor recreation and nature interpretation.*

When Richard Louv wrote his watershed book, *Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children for Nature-Deficit Disorder*, he sparked an international dialogue among those concerned with the limited opportunities that today's youth have to interact with the natural world. Natural resource professionals, parents, educators, mental health professionals, physicians and others have come together from all over the world to tackle this challenge. One of their most important goals has been to find ways to connect children with experiences that trigger emotional connections to the outdoors, through a full range of sensory stimulation and active participation.



2015 Program Overview:

2015 was an exciting year for CJC and its corps members. This summer CJC hired 13 former corps members as Program Staff. Many of which have gone on to college and are bring their experiences as former corps members to current participants. CJC also introduced Archery as a new enrichment opportunity for youth. Crews participated in some new and exciting conservation projects with opportunities to visit different parks and interact with park staff across Maryland:

CHANGES:

- Adding Archery to our Youth Enrichment Activities
- Completing Conservation Projects at Baltimore County Parks

ADJUSTMENTS

- Recreated a more recreational focus to enrichment activities
- Rotated conservation projects to include Cunningham Falls and Sandy Point State Parks as regular project sites for CJC.

IMPROVEMENTS

- Focus on bringing in former CJC Corps Members as Program Staff
- Effort in Emphasizing thorough completion of Youth Surveys and Evaluations



BUDGET

- Stable partnerships and contributions to program operations and projects.
- Collaboration on grant applications and national initiatives to organize resources for program stability.

Corps Member Highlight



Name: Kenon Johnson

Park: Gwynns Falls Park

Year with CJC: 3rd

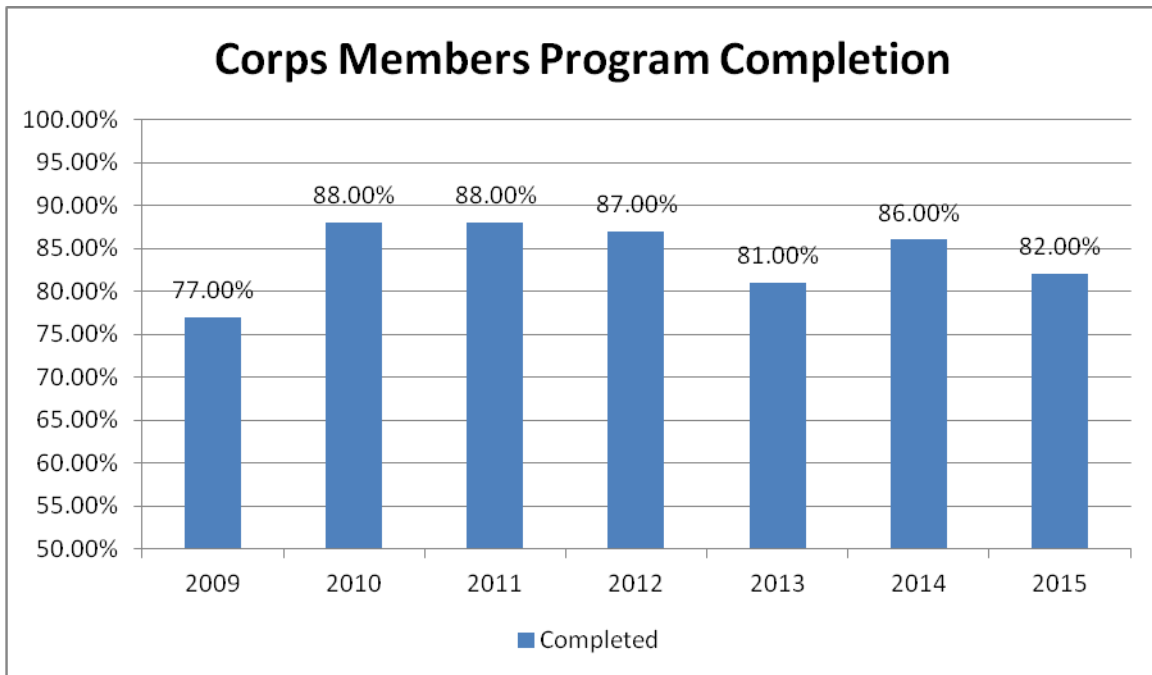
Like many of our Corps Members, working for CJC was Kenon's first job. He traveled up 3 hours each day just to make it to work on time. Kenon says that he reflects on CJC's core principles daily as they help strengthen his life integrity and responsibility. As a Corps Member, he enjoyed working outdoors with a diverse group of people and getting tough jobs done as a part of a team.

One of his most memorable experiences was the summer camping trip to Rocky Gap State Park. Kenon is attending Frostburg State University in Western Maryland majoring in Sociology. He would like to work for CJC while in college and plans to be a counselor once he completes college.

Kenon encourages other young people to work for CJC and "to get to know nature". He feels he learned from the experiences as a Corps Member and feels every young person should have outdoor experiences like CJC.

Retention and Successful Completion of the Program:

A high retention rate is essential to the success of CJC and a key indicator of a worthwhile investment. Since its creation in 2008, the program has made strides to increase its retention rate. In an effort to both increase teamwork and decrease the Corps Member to Crew Chief ratio, crew sizes were reduced from a maximum of 10 to a range of 5-7. Additionally, the SPIRIT Principles were created to provide Corps Members with a clear understanding of the program's expectations throughout the summer and a reference for understanding expectations for behavior beyond CJC. "SPIRIT Cards" are provided to youth as a way to both reward Corps Members for positive and discourage negative behaviors. The program's expectations are high and require significant commitment from youth to endure strict rules regarding attendance and performance.



From 2010 to 2015 the retention rate has remained in the mid-eighties. These results indicate that CJC is a worthwhile investment and is achieving its youth development goals by retaining such a high percentage of Corps Members from the beginning to the end of the summer employment program.

Performance Evaluations:

Corps Members also receive three performance evaluations during the program that indicate how well youth demonstrate the SPIRIT Principles on a day-to-day basis. The initial, midterm and final evaluations not only provide constructive feedback on Corps Member's behavior, but also serve as a valuable introduction to the professional world. The evaluations also provide Corps Members with a clear understanding of personal strengths and weaknesses, which allows Crew Chiefs and Corps Members to set goals to strive for by graduation day. Corps Members can score anywhere on a range of 1 to 4. One indicating "needs improvement," two indicating "meets expectations," three indicating "exceeds expectations" and four indicating "outstanding."



Increases in SPIRIT

According to Corps Member evaluations, overall SPIRIT increased in over

85% of Corps Members from the Initial to Final performance evaluation. More specifically, Stewardship increased for 82% of Corps Members, Professionalism increase for 84% of Corps Members, Initiative increased for 88% of Corps Members, Respect increased for 90% of Corps Members, Integrity increased for 85% of Corps Members and Teamwork increased for 83% of Corps Members. These results indicate that participation in CJC fosters behavioral changes in all of the SPIRIT Principles.

Returning Corp Members Score Higher

Evaluations also indicate the difference between new and returning Corps Members in score at initial and final evaluations. Returning Corps Members scored slightly higher on initial evaluations, scoring an average of 2.7 out of 4 for overall SPIRIT on initial evaluations (compared to 2.2 for new members) and an average of 3.7 for overall SPIRIT on final evaluation (compared to 3.3 for new members). These results indicate that returning Corps Members retain a certain degree of the job/life skills they acquire in CJC (the SPIRIT Principles) and come back to the program with a better understanding of what is expected. This allows them to score higher on both initial and final evaluations than new CJC Corps Members.



The CJC Enrichment Experience

The Camping Experience:

All Corps Members participate in an overnight, three day - two night camping experience during their six week summer experience with the Maryland Conservation Jobs Corps. The purpose of camping is to expose youth to a wide range of outdoor recreational activities and to teach concepts such as "Leave No Trace." The Corps Members are challenged to step outside of their comfort zones and asked to leave the conveniences of modern life behind. While camping, youth learn to pitch a tent, what necessities to bring on a camping trip, to identify wildlife, and proper camping etiquette. Youth also participate in a ropes course, canoe trip, night hikes, camp fires, s'more making, and swimming during their time at camp. There were two camping locations during the 2015 CJC season, Rocky Gap and Tuckahoe State Parks. Camping provides youth an opportunity to see the benefits of preserving natural spaces for recreation and relaxation. Camp Staff members are trained for fun and innovative ways to engage youth in outdoor recreation and orienteering. Each summer we discover the impact camping has on changing perspectives of youth

who have never been camping before. The experience breeds comradery among corps members and an appreciation for nature that hopefully last a lifetime. At the close of each program year, camp staff selects those youth who not only challenge themselves by eagerly engaging in every activity but also had a great attitude. Almost every youth, when asked about the highlight of their summer points to camping as that time being the most fun they have ever had.



Environmental Enrichment:

Environmental enrichment has been a continuing priority of the Maryland Conservation Jobs Corps, as outlined by its mission, goals, and core values. In 2015 CJC's enrichment program was restructured to include more recreational activities and combine those activities with a scaled down version of watershed education. Youth participated in three enrichment activities during the five weeks:



Archery and Wildlife Identification

Kayaking and Macro Invertebrates

Fishing and Watershed Watchdogs

These activities were geared to provide youth with authentic outdoor recreational experiences and

attempt to inspire youth to care for the environment by exposing them to the benefits of a unpolluted natural world. Each activity also introduced CJC participants to a variety of environmental issues including pollution, human impacts, biodiversity loss, and invasive species.

2015 CJC Youth Survey

Introduction:

In order to collect information and attempt to draw conclusions about the Maryland Conservation Jobs Corps, a survey is administered to youth participants each summer. The survey is designed to gauge changes in attitude (positive, negative and neutral) that occur as a result to participation in CJC. The questions are strongly aligned with elements of the SPIRIT Principles and the survey strives to answer the questions, “Is CJC doing what it intends to do?”

In past years the survey has been administered as a “pre/post” survey, the Pre Survey given during the first week of CJC and the Post Survey given during the last week of CJC. In order to collect more accurate and statistically reliable data, the Maryland Conservation Jobs Corps developed a new survey tool, modeled after the American Camp Association’s Outcomes Battery. This survey focus on “outcomes related to skills that build successful contributing members of our society.”¹ This survey tool offers numerous questions and categories that can be easily customized to fit the needs of CJC.

Structure:

Outcomes Battery is administered differently from traditional “Pre/Post” surveys. Rather than administering the same survey at two points in time, this survey is only administered once, at the end of a program/camp. Youth are presented with a list of questions in the present tense and instructed to answer based on their current feelings. Youth are then presented with the same set of questions, this time in the past tense, and instructed to answer based on their feelings before the given program. This allows youth to directly compare their current feeling to their past feelings, in theory providing a more accurate outcome.

In the 2015 CJC season, youth arrived on June 29rd and graduated on July 31st. The survey was administered July 23, 2015 through July 31, 2015. The survey was divided into five days, each day focused around a particular theme or SPIRIT Principle. Each day youth answered ten questions, in both the past and present tense. Answers were circle only and included a choice of: true, somewhat true, a little true, a little false, somewhat false, and false. The survey structured in the following way:

Day 1: Stewardship (Thurs. July 23)

Day 2: Professionalism and Integrity (Fri. July 24)

Day 3: Initiative (Mon. July 27)

Day 4: Respect and Initiative (Tues. July 28)

Day 5: Teamwork (Wed. July 29)

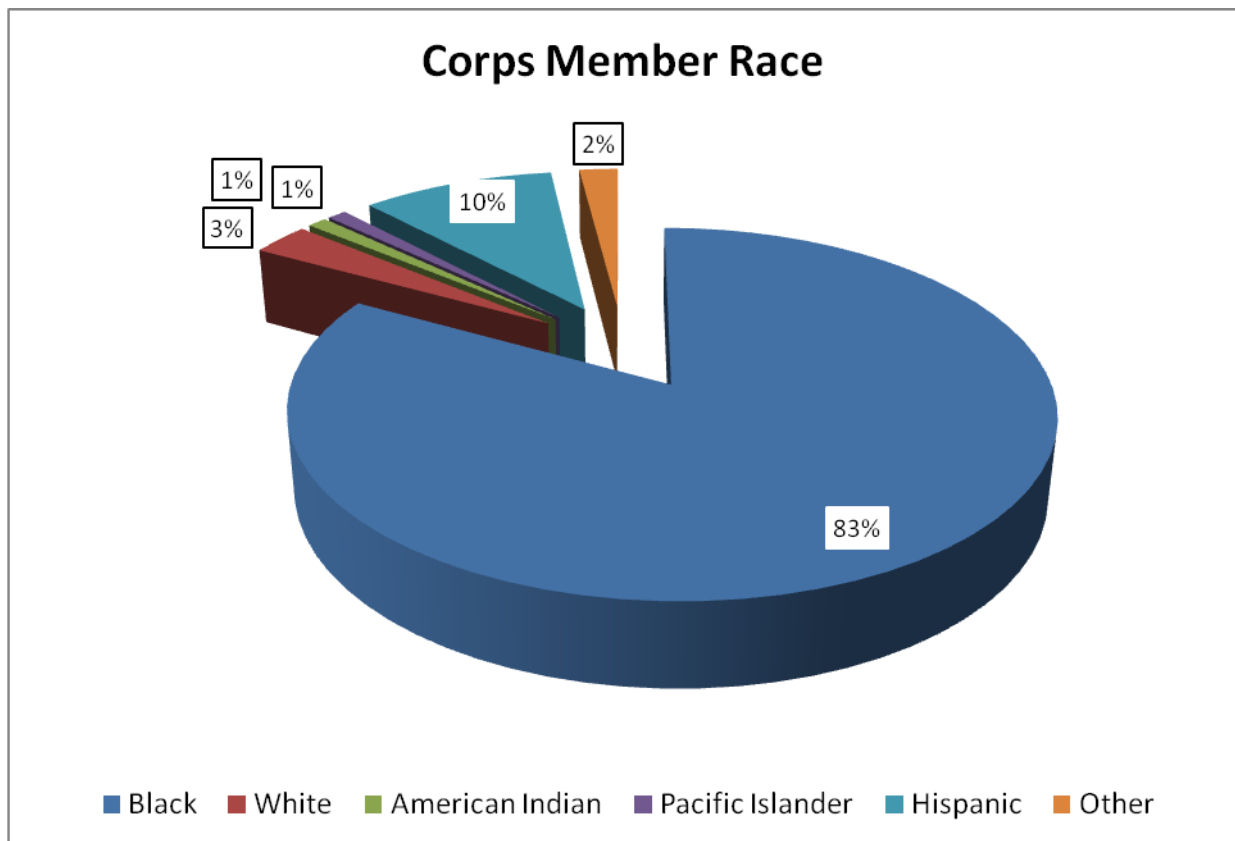
¹ <http://www.acacamps.org/research/youth-outcomes-battery>

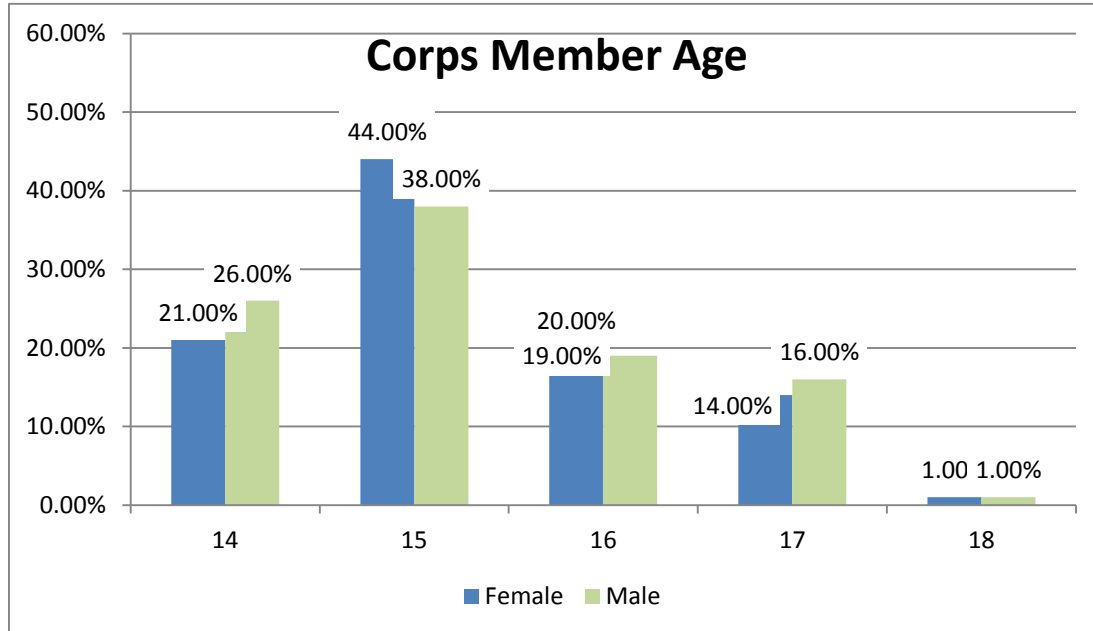
2015 Survey Results

In the summer of 2015, 314 youth participated in the Maryland Conservation Jobs Corps. CJC received 260 responses to the survey that was administered July 23, 2015 through July 29, 2015.

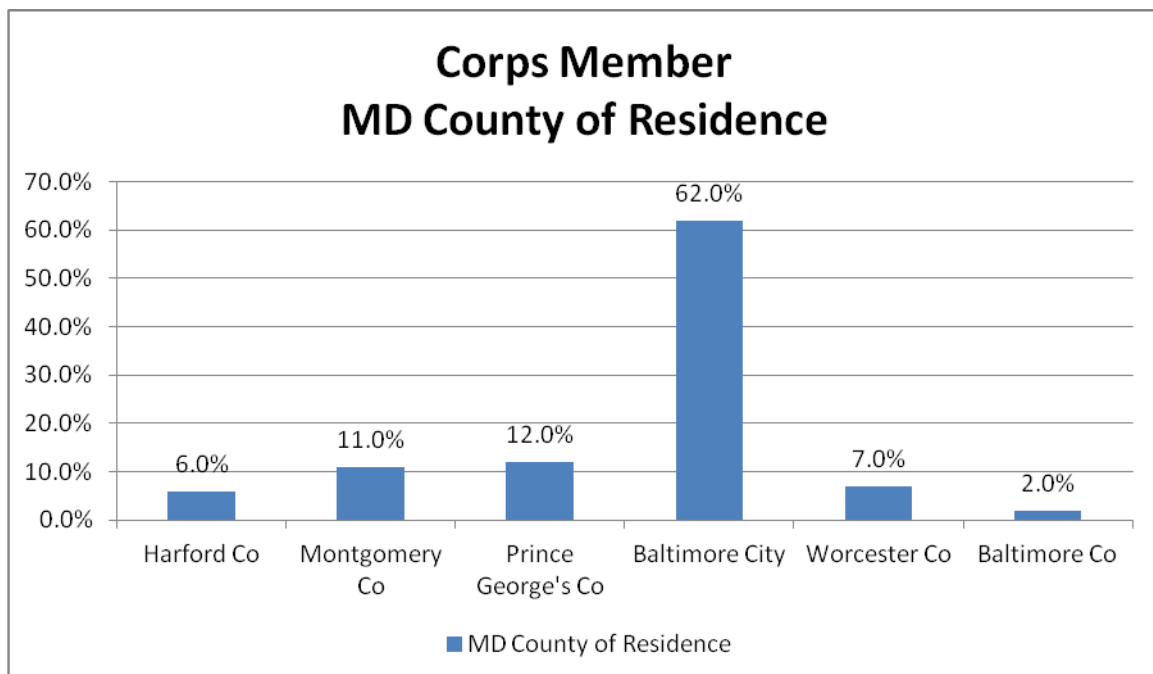
Demographic Information:

Of the 260 survey responses that were received, 52% were male and 48% were female. Furthermore, the majority of the respondents were of age 15 (44%), of Black/African American ethnicity, completed their first year with the Maryland Conservation Jobs Corps (83%).





The Maryland Conservation Corps is an intervention program and geared towards modeling positive work habits in youth who have never worked before. We find that as youth become older, the program's principals become a less effective mode for evaluating youth. Our strategy for recruiting youth to CJC includes identifying youth ages 14 or 15 who have never worked before or express an interest in working outdoors, while saving older slots (16 and 17 year olds) for returners who show an aptitude and desire for working outdoors.



The large majority of our youth reside in Baltimore City. It is critical that we provide access to state parks and diverse outdoor experiences for youth who have cannot readily access these natural places. Our focus is presented in the chart above.

Scores:

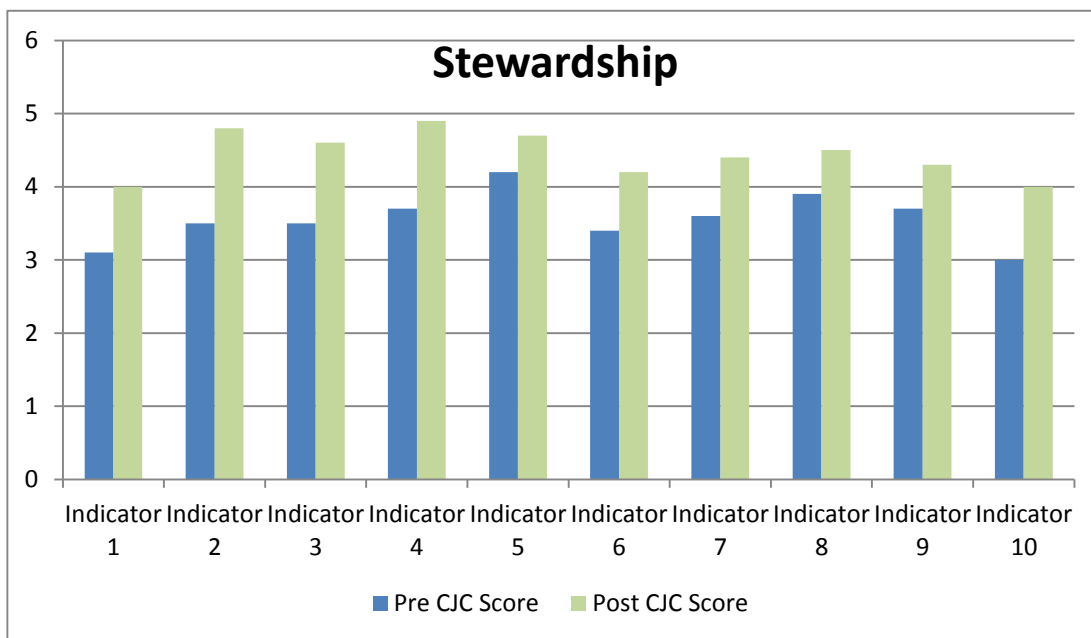
Corps Members responded with one of the following; “true, somewhat true, a little true, a little false, somewhat false, and false” to each of the survey questions. Each response coordinates with a numerical value. More positive responses correspond with higher point values and less positive responses correspond with lower point values, for example:

True = 6	False = 1
Somewhat True = 5	Somewhat False = 2
A Little True = 4	A Little False = 3

After all the responses were recorded, means were taken, to represent the average score for each question/category. Higher means represent a more positive average attitude and a lower mean represents a less positive average attitude.

Stewardship Trends:

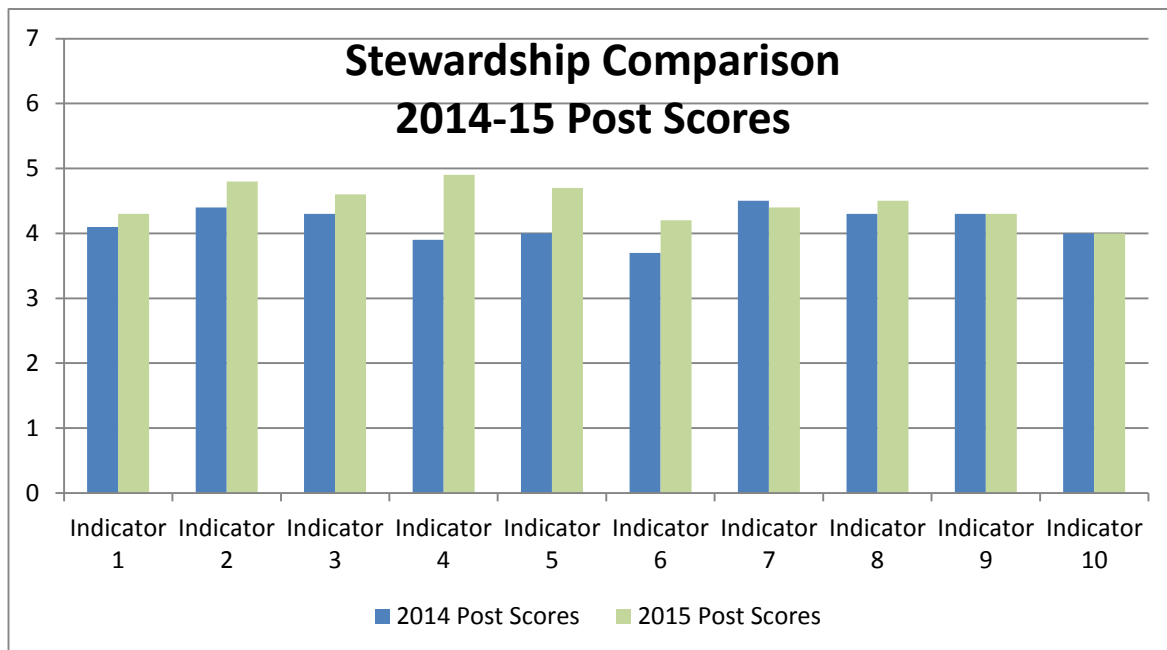
Corps Members were asked ten questions in both the present and past tense relating to Stewardship. A significant number of Corps Members responded more positively in the present tense than the past tense, showing that Corps Member’s attitudes towards Stewardship became more positive after participation in CJC.



There was an overall increase across all stewardship indicators from Pre to Post responses. The largest increases were represented in Indicators 2 and 10, “I want to spend time outdoors” and “Having a clean, healthy environment is important”. There was an overall increase from stewardship Post CJC scores from 2014 Post scores.

Stewardship Indicators:

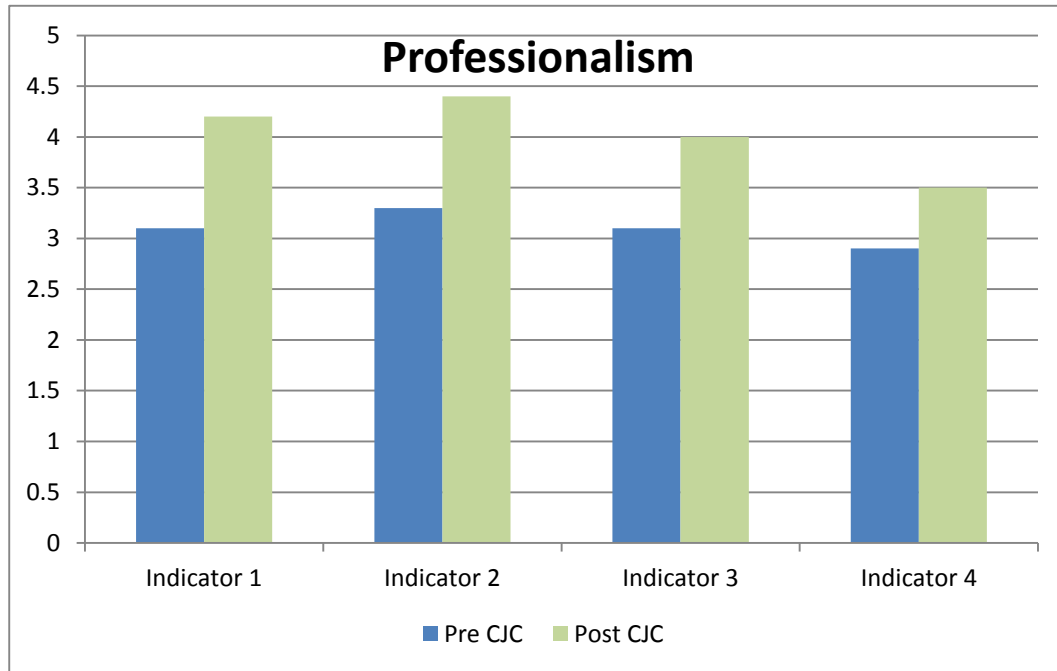
- Indicator 1: “I enjoy being outdoors and in nature” False (1) – True (6)
- Indicator 2: “I want to spend time outdoors”
- Indicator 3: “I feel free when I am outdoors”
- Indicator 4: “I feel safe and comfortable in nature”
- Indicator 5: “I feel connected and a part of the natural environment”
- Indicator 6: “I enjoy outdoor activities like camping, hiking and swimming”
- Indicator 7: “I enjoy learning about the environment and want to learn more”
- Indicator 8: “I can see myself in a career working outside”
- Indicator 9: “I want to protect the environment in the future”
- Indicator 10: “Having a clean, healthy environment is important”



Post score comparisons from 2014 to 2015 show significant increases in indicators 4 and 5. Decreases in indicator 7 may be the result of adjusting enrichment activities to include more outdoor recreation and moving away from “Bridging the Watershed” activities which are more educational based enrichment activities.

Professionalism Trends:

Corps Members were asked four questions relating to Professionalism in both the present and past tense. Each question was responded to more positively in the present tense than the past tense, showing that Corps Member's attitudes towards Professionalism became more positive after participation in CJC.



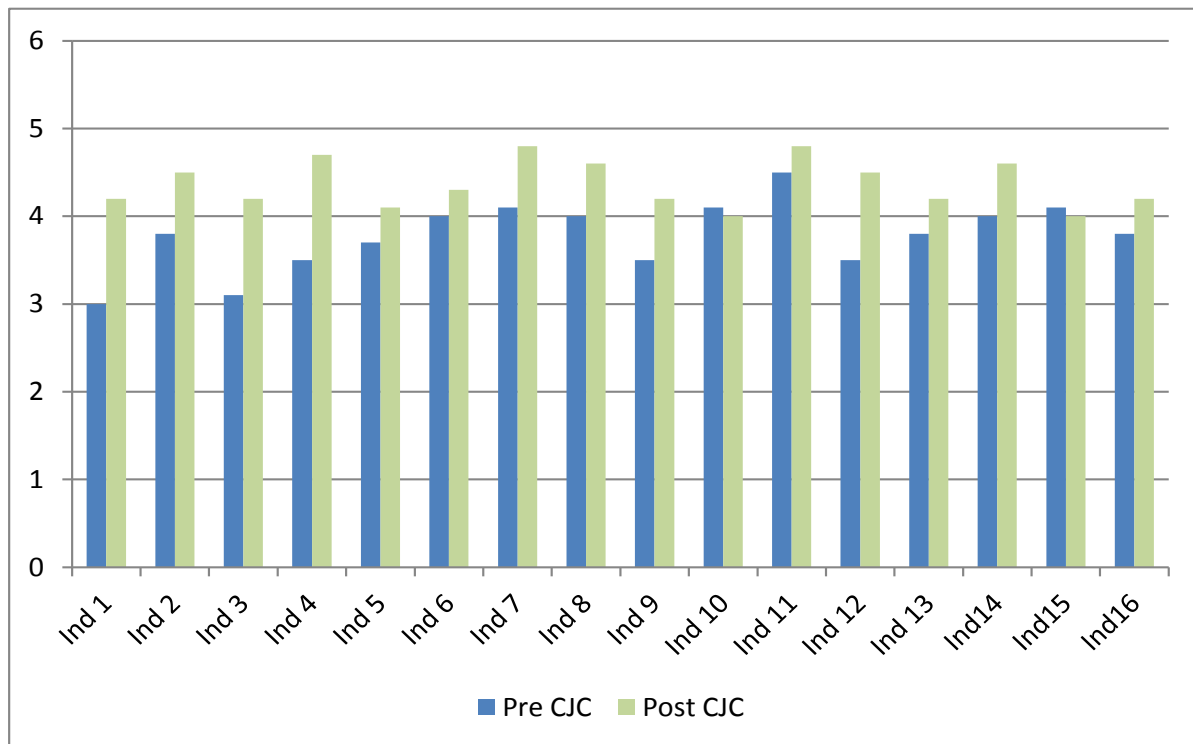
Professionalism scores increased across each indicator and may be an unintentional effect of administering the survey to youth at the end of the program, which would not include program voluntary and involuntary attrition. The pre-program survey administered to youth as a part of their interview process may be a more accurate pre-program measure of professionalism. It is critical to note that we are observing any decreases in professionalism as an evaluative measure of our program and a tool to address programmatic changes. As a part of the exit interview for youth exiting the program prior to completion, we may look to complete the professionalism questions for a better post measure.

Professionalism Indicators:

- Indicator 1 "I am a good employee" False (1) – True (6)
- Indicator 2 "It is important to show up to work everyday and on time"
- Indicator 3 "I respect others, even when I don't agree with them"
- Indicator 4 "It is important to wear my uniform properly"

Initiative Trends:

Corps Members were asked sixteen questions in both the past and present tense relating to Initiative. CJC defined initiative by both taking responsibility for tasks that involve the corps members self and also by taking ownership or leadership in tasks that involved others or their team/crew. The 16 questions geared towards initiative attempted to rate present tense and past tense, showing that Corps Member's attitudes towards Initiative prior to and after participation in CJC. The chart below highlights 16 indicators for Initiative.



The most significant increases in responses **Post CJC** occurred in questions 1, 3, 4, 7, and 12. There is also a distinct difference in how youth associate the connection between learning new ideas (indicator 15) and learning new activities (indicator 7):

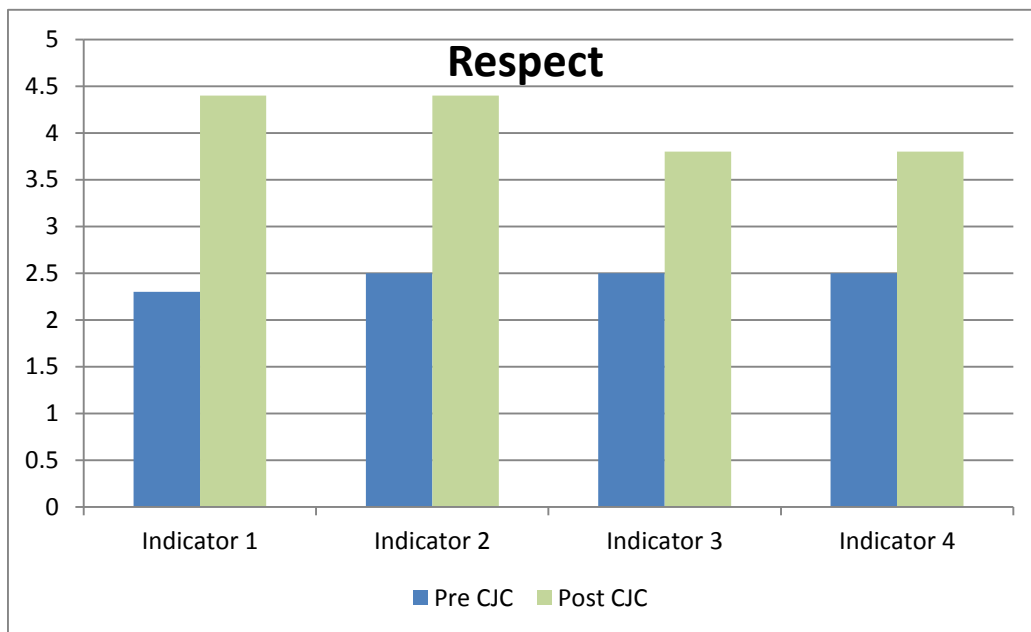
Initiative Indicators:

- Indicator 1: "I will be successful in life" False (1) – True (6)
- Indicator 2: "I plan to graduate from high school / get my GED"
- Indicator 3: "I plan to educate myself past high school"
- Indicator 4: "My future job will be one that I enjoy"
- Indicator 5: "I will be able to make my own decisions about my future"

- Indicator 6 “I want to get an education beyond a 4 year college degree (Masters) (Doctorate).
- Indicator 7 “I look forward to learning to do new activities”
- Indicator 8 “I can make good decisions by myself, without the help of adults”
- Indicator 9 “I go out of my way to help others”
- Indicator 10 “I can do things on my own and I am independent”
- Indicator 11 “I give my best effort in everything I do”
- Indicator 12 “I can solve problems without help from my friends”
- Indicator 13 “I do good work”
- Indicator 14 “I do what I say I am going to do”
- Indicator 15 “I want to learn more about new ideas”
- Indicator 16 “I want to meet new people and get to know them”

Respect Trends:

Corps Members were asked four questions relating to Respect. Corps Member responses trended towards being higher in the post questions than in the pre questions. Respect is defined by not only how youth feel they show respect but also how they feel they receive respect.



Respect Indicators:

Indicator 1: “I am respectful to my Crew Chief and fellow Corps Members” False (1) – True (6)

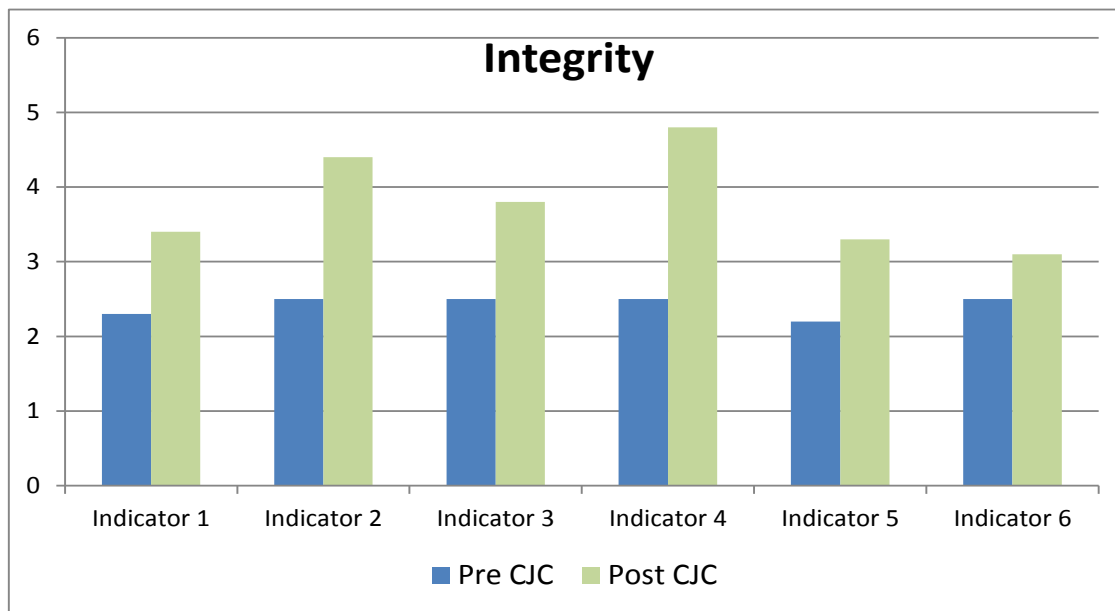
Indicator 2 “I use tools properly and pay attention to safety while working”

Indicator 3 “I feel respected by adults”

Indicator 4 “I respect others and myself”

Integrity Trends:

Corps Members were asked six questions relating to Integrity. All six questions were responded to more positively in the present tense than the past tense, showing that Corps Member’s attitudes towards Integrity became more positive after participation in CJC.



The largest increase from pre to post scores occurred in question 4, “I except responsibility for my actions”. While each question in the Integrity category experiences positive change, question six, “It is important for me to be honest and have people trust me”, experienced the least amount of change from Pre CJC to Post CJC.

Indicator 1: “It is important for me to take care of myself” False (1) – True (6)

Indicator 2 “It is important to eat healthy”

Indicator 3 “It is important to exercise”

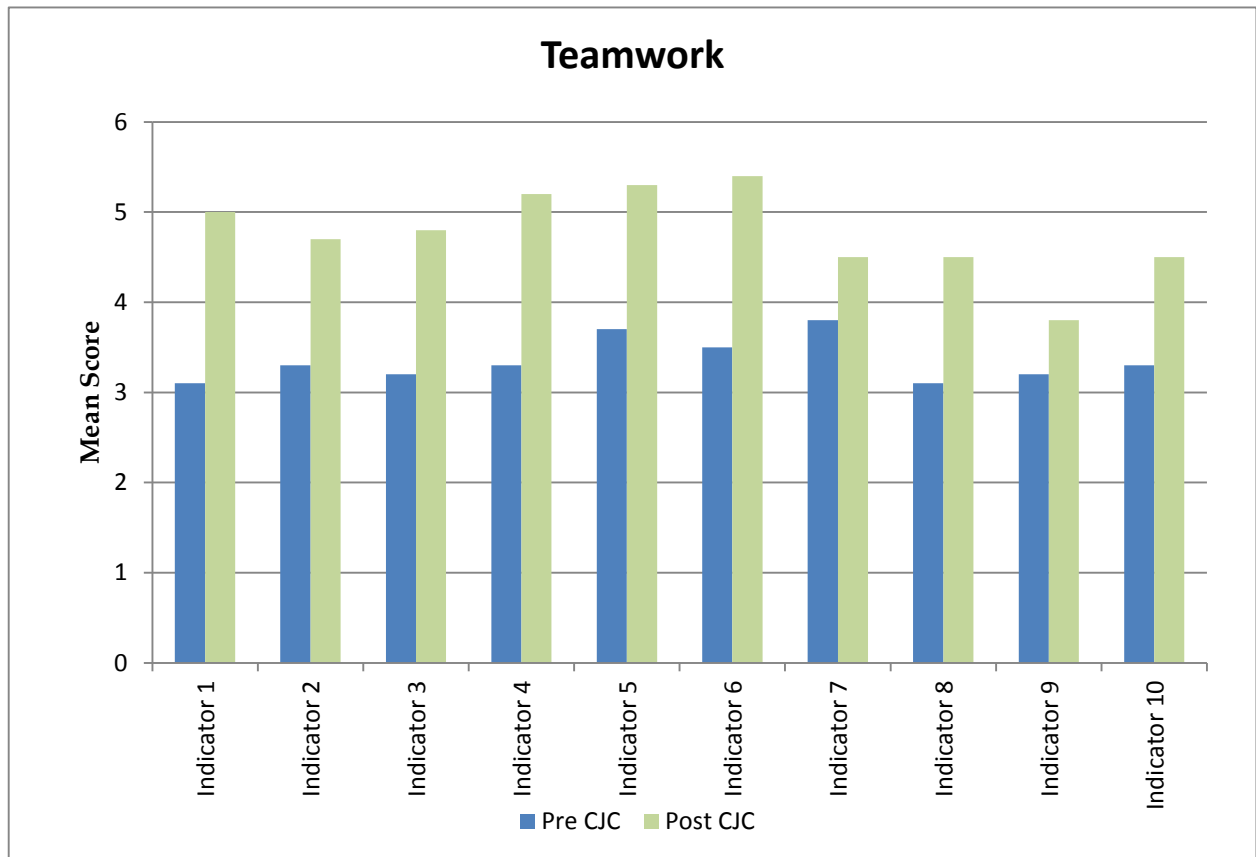
Indicator 4 “I except responsibility for my actions”

Indicator 5 “I own up to my mistakes and I try to make things right”

Indicator 6 “It is important for me to be honest and have people trust me”

Teamwork Trends

Corps Members were asked ten questions relating to Teamwork. CJC defines Teamwork as the ability to cooperate with fellow corps members, lead and follow, disagree but still be a functional member of the team. This appears to be the strength of the corps based model that CJC employs. The program promotes projects and activities that require teams of youth to cooperate, collaborate and endure difficult conditions and circumstances to complete projects.



Teamwork Indicators:

- Indicator 1: “I can be a good group leader” False (1) – True (6)
- Indicator 2 “I can help a group be successful”
- Indicator 3 “I can be happy even when my group has decided to do something I don’t want to”
- Indicator 4 “I can appreciate opinions that are different from my own”
- Indicator 5 “I can place group goals above the things that I want”
- Indicator 6 “I can cooperate with others and I enjoy working as a team”

- Indicator 7 “I get angry when people disagree with me”
- Indicator 8 “It upsets me if I let my team down”
- Indicator 9 “A team can accomplish more if they work together”
- Indicator 10 “I get along well with others”

A Profile of a First Year Corps Member

Name: Grant Abraham

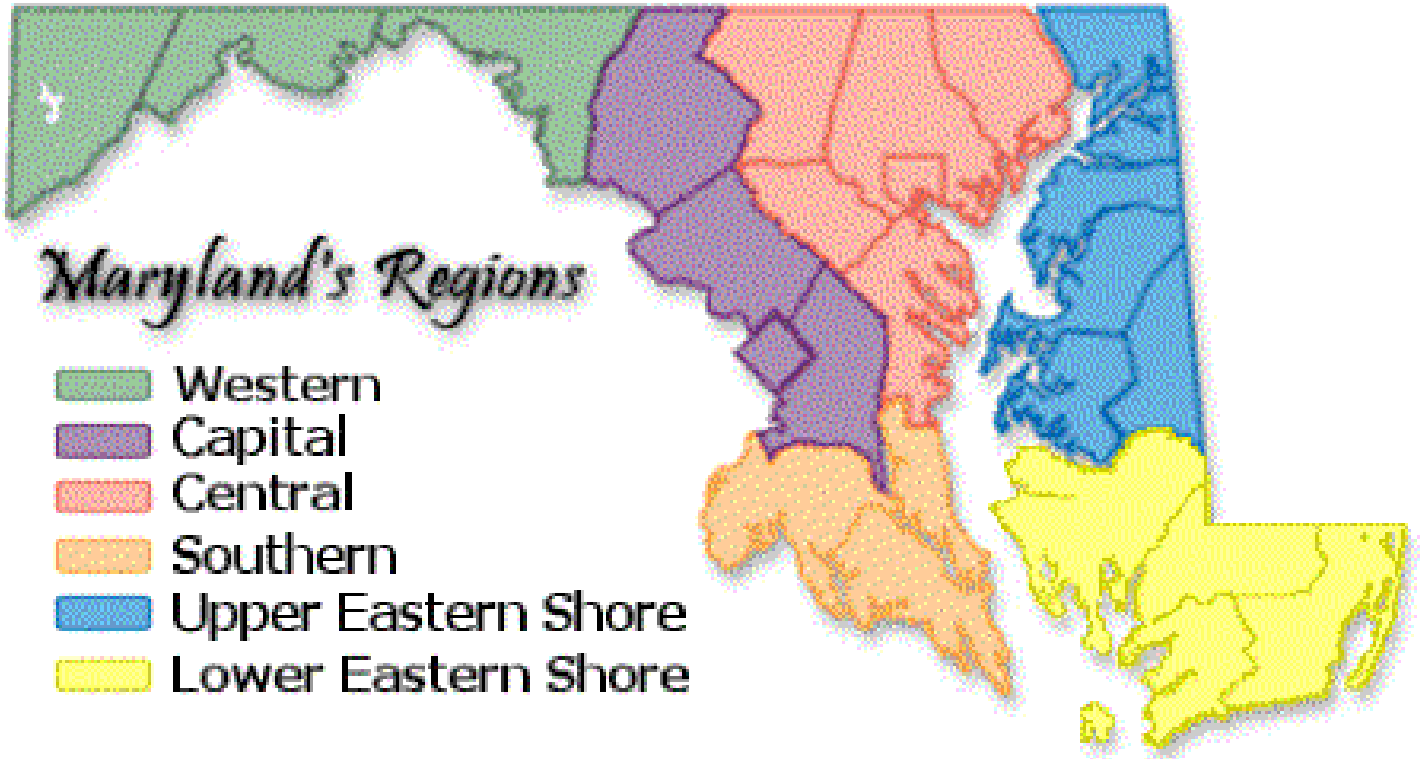
Park: Gunpowder Falls
State Park

Age: 15



As a first year corps member, Grant came to CJC with little knowledge of the outdoors. In fact, during the CJC graduation ceremony he explained how, when completing his summer job application, he selected every option except outdoors. Grant did an outstanding job as a first year Corps Member, not only did he have perfect attendance, he was a daily contributor to motivate his crew to complete task, participated in every enrichment activity and was the overall SPIRIT Award winner for Gunpowder Falls State Park; an amazing accomplishment for a first year participant. Grant took part in many firsts this summer; first time camping, canoeing, fishing, working, shooting a bow and arrow and learning several interesting facts about nature.

CJC's Base Parks



Central - Susquehanna, Gwynns Falls,
Gunpowder, Patapsco, Lake
Clifton, Sandy Point

Lower Eastern Shore - Assateague, Tuckahoe

Capital - Merkle, Seneca

Western - Rocky Gap, Cunningham

Project Highlights:

Assateague Island State Park:

Assateague is Maryland's only oceanfront park. It is located on Assateague Island, a barrier island bordered by the Atlantic Ocean on the east and the Sinepuxent Bay on the west. Its two miles of ocean beaches offer swimming, beachcombing, sunbathing, surfing and fishing. The bayside offers visitors the chance to explore secluded coves by canoe or kayak. The marsh areas have a variety of wildlife, including deer, waterfowl and feral horses.

Assateague Project Highlight: Shade Shelters

Purpose:

This project will teach the crew the importance of providing cooling stations in areas where trees are not native to the environment. Assateague's sandy beaches made for a perfect area to construct shade shelters for the public to engage in park programs without over exposure in the sun. This project will, once finished, will be a place the CJC members can come back to for years to come and see the impact they have made on the park and visitors. This project will teach the crewmembers about teamwork and providing safe places for the public to enjoy the beach.

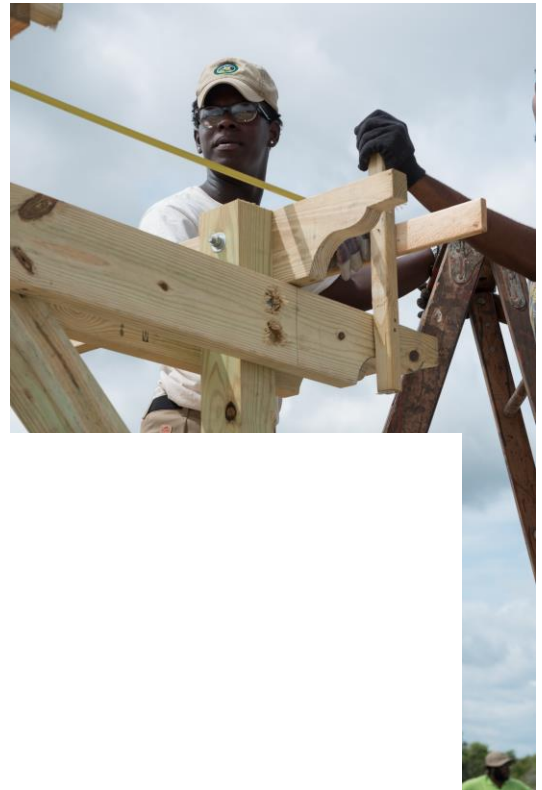


Skills Learned:

On this job the crew will learn tool safety and construction skills. They will also receive training on dehydration and the dangers of over exposure and how to prevent heat stroke.

Stewardship Elements:

Corps Members learned the concept of Leave No Trace and how it is applied on a large scale. Learning to leave a minimal impact on the natural environment was strongly emphasized during this project. In the construction of the natural play area, Corps Members also learned about wildlife habitats and how to identify areas that need to be preserved. Specifically, Corps Members learned to identify and preserve the habitats of Ghost Crabs, Shorebirds, and native Butterflies. An emphasis was also placed on the lifecycle of Monarch Butterflies, the importance of Milkweed and preservation along migration routes. The importance of the Children in Nature Initiative was also imparted to Corps Members.



Gunpowder Falls State Park:

Established in 1959 to protect the Gunpowder River and the Big and Little Gunpowder valleys, Gunpowder Falls State Park is now one of Maryland's largest state parks. Comprised of over 18,000 acres in Harford and Baltimore Counties, Gunpowder's narrow corridors host a varied topography ranging from tidal wetlands to steep rugged slopes. Gunpowder features more than 120 miles of trails, protected wetlands, historic sites, fishing and canoeing/kayaking streams, a swimming beach and a marina. Park areas include: Hereford Area, Torrey C. Brown Trail, Sweet Air Area, Central Area, Hammerman Area and Dundee Creek Marina.

Gunpowder Project Highlight: Floating Wetlands at Dundee Creek

Purpose:

Floating plants absorb excess nutrients that could otherwise lead to aquatic weed growth, harmful algae blooms, and fish kills.

Skills Learned:

Corps Members learned how floating plants benefit wildlife by providing food and safety, as well as cooling water temperatures. Corps members also learned about native plants and why it is important to plant native species.

Stewardship:

Corps Members now understand some sustainable and environmentally safe ways to manage pollution in waterways. They also discussed the differences between native and invasive species and how invasive species can have negative effects on the ecosystem.

Gwynn's Falls Trail Park:

The Trail begins at the I-70 Park & Ride trailhead and generally follows the Gwynns Falls stream to the Middle Branch and the Inner Harbor of the Patapsco River. All 15 miles of the Gwynns Falls trail system are open. The Gwynns Falls Trail is a unique urban hiking and biking trail providing access to a scenic and historic greenway stream valley in Baltimore City.²

Gwynn's Falls Project Highlight: Nature Play Space at Carrie Murray Nature Center

Purpose:

To construct a play area for youth, utilizing natural materials from the surrounding environment. Youth constructed a natural play space which included a life sized bee hive made of bamboo and vines, a life sized birds nest made from fallen tree limbs, a reflexology foot path made from river rocks, and a butterfly enclosure.

Skills Learned:

Corps Members learned basic carpentry and landscaping skills. They also learned tool safety and project planning strategies and butterfly migration.

Stewardship:

Corps members learned teamwork and initiative working on several projects simultaneously, they had to multi task and work quickly but safely.



² <http://www.gwynnsfallstrail.org/>

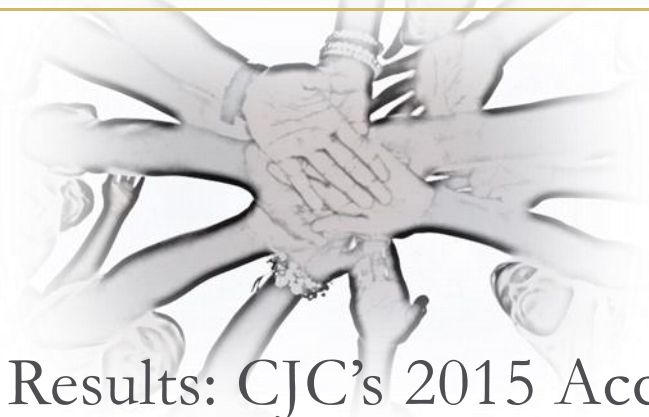
Our Partners:

In order to provide youth with conservation service opportunities and to ensure positive outcomes in terms of youth development, the Maryland Conservation Jobs Corps maintains invaluable partnerships with the Parks & People Foundation, Baltimore City Mayor's Office of Employee Development, Civic Works, Baltimore City Public Schools, Baltimore City Recreation and Parks, Maryland Department of Human Resources, Maryland Department of Juvenile Services, Montgomery County Department of Economic Development, Montgomery County Parks, Prince George's County Economic Development Corporation, Prince George's County Parks and Recreation, Lower Shore Workforce Alliance, Susquehanna Workforce, Harford County Department of Social Services, Harford County Sheriff's Office and numerous other youth-based organizations.

"Serving as a partner in developing and supporting the Conservation Jobs Corps (CJC) program with the Maryland State Parks, Department of Natural Resources, has been very rewarding for the Parks & People Foundation and the youth that we both serve. The youth have gained fundamental work skills, on-the-job training in environmental stewardship, regular paychecks, and guidance for continuing their education. It is exciting to see how much the youth's parents and guardians have come to appreciate the real world experiences gained by their youth over the last four years. Everyone loves the program and its results. CJC workers get real work done, increase their career potential and gain greater knowledge of and respect for Maryland's public park system."

-Parks & People Foundation
Jackie Carrera, President & CEO

The Maryland Conservation Jobs Corps: Summer 2015 Report



Tangible Results: CJC's 2015 Accomplishments

ASSATEAGUE (Pocomoke State Park)

- 2 accessible parking spots painted at the Nature Center
 - 2 accessible parking spots painted at the Marina
 - 30 parking spaces painted throughout park
 - 2 – 4' deep hole dug for wind turbine
- 1 bulletin board built and installed at Nature Center
- 1 set of cabinets built and installed at Nature Center
 - 1 aquarium cleaned for the horseshoe crab
- 5 bulletin boards built and installed at bathhouses & did roofing on each
 - 1 toy box built and painted at Nature Play Area
 - Created wooden labels for the whale bones display
- 2 truckloads of brush cleared at entrance to campground
 - Began construction on the Canoe Shelter
- 3 ADA accessible pond piers and trails reconstructed and put in place
 - 5 wooden rocking benches constructed
- 2 miles of road evened out on the Acorn Trail
 - 2 playgrounds worth of woodchips spread
 - 30 – 3'x3' holes dug

GWYNNS FALLS (Sandy Point, Cunningham Falls, and Gambrill State Parks)

- 1 natural play space built (human-sized bird's nest & bee hive, 2 balance beams, & 3 tree cookie board games)
 - 1 mile of trail deburmed and cleared
 - 2 miles of trail filled in with 110 tons of #10 screening
- 550 native plants planted in 3 rain gardens: two 20'x4' & one 12'x12'
 - 250 flowers planted around 1 comfort station
 - 1 picnic table built
 - 1 Observation Deck repaired
 - Rock Run Amphitheater repaired
 - Houck Amphitheater repaired
 - 1 electrical control board repaired
 - 6 split rail fence sections removed
- 1 rain garden constructed fully (20'x30'x5' hole dug, filled with various materials, and 150 trees & plants planted, and covered with mulch)

PATAPSCO – HILTON

- .5 mile of trail (All Sensory Trail) reconstructed and treaded for people of all abilities
 - 70 guide posts built and installed with cable connecting all
 - 5 planter boxes built and installed
 - Drums and chimes installed
 - 8 tons of clay/dirt added to tread and tamped
 - 1 ton of rocks removed by hand
 - 3 playgrounds weeded and mulched
 - 8 parking lots repainted
 - 8 sections of split rail fencing installed
 - 16 native plants planted in 2 beds
 - 8 concrete mosaic tiles made
 - Avalon Visitor Center Sign built and installed
 - 54 river markers painted
 - 3.75 miles of park area pruned
 - 22 miles of trails worked on:
 - 27 drains installed
 - 11 water bars installed
 - 5 sections deburmed
 - All pruned and cleared for brush

- 13 tires removed and Tire Playground cleaned up
 - 5 campsite pads redone
 - 4 horseshoe pits built and installed
 - 1 restroom rehabbed on outside
 - 2 hand rails built and installed at shelters
 - 9 truckloads of stone loaded and unloaded
 - 94 – 55gal bags of invasive plants removed
 - 6 yds of retaining wall built
 - 8 miles of road cleared of debris after storms
 - 3, 075 sq ft of various area mulched
 - 52 – 55gal bags of trash collected
- 48 posts and signs made and installed around shelters
- **PATAPSCO – MCKELDIN**
- 20 old grills removed and replaced with new ones
 - 7 campsites re-stoned
 - 20 campsites had drainage added
 - 50 yds of 8’ tall fencing painted
- 5 – 20’x20’x10’ mews for birds of prey at the aviary rebuilt
 - 12 miles of trails worked on:
 - 38 drains installed
 - 19 drains cleaned
 - 4 knicks
 - 4 sections deburmed
 - 3 fixed stream entries
 - .65 miles of brushing
 - .04 miles of bench cutting
 - .01 miles of rock wall
 - 1,000 lbs of rocks/boulders relocated by hand
 - 1 cattle gate installed
- 18 new perches constructed and installed in the aviary mews

MERKLE (Cedarville State Forest)

- 1 floating wetland constructed and put in place
 - 4 bat boxes constructed and installed
- 1 – 8'x3'x3' solitary bee hive constructed and installed
 - 1 – 4'x4' photo blind constructed and installed
 - 35 – 55gal bags of invasive plants removed
 - 6 trail registers built & 1 installed
 - 1 Tree of Heaven (invasive) removal
 - 6 truckloads of pine needles removed
- 2 bridges worth of shingle paper added to bridges on Green Trail
 - 10.5 miles of trails pruned, cleared, and drainage added
 - 5 blue bird boxes built & 2 installed
 - 50ft of guard rail painted
 - 1 bridge deconstructed then reconstructed
 - 75 tree tubes removed

SENECA (Montgomery County Parks & Recreation)

- 88 picnic tables refurbished
 - 7 10x12 picnic pads built
 - 3 20x12 picnic pads built
- 6 pavilions cleaned, pressure-washed, & painted
 - 6 comfort stations (restrooms) painted
 - 2 full-size soccer goals built
- 10 55gal bags of trash collected at various county parks
 - 50ft of invasive plants removed

SUSQUEHANNA

- 92 trees planted
- 194 native plants planted for various projects
 - 19 – 55gal bags of trash collected
 - 2 trees removed from road after storm
 - 10 Trash-Free bag holders made
- 1 20'x4' trail puncheon built and installed
 - 55ft of trail repaired
- 123 pieces of bamboo removed, cut, and installed
 - 45 bags of mulch laid
- 1 5'x5'x8' butterfly enclosure constructed
- 2 floating wetlands built and installed
 - 30ft of logs cleared from water
 - 12 trail steps removed and rebuilt
- 10 benches sanded/painted/reposted
 - 1 storage trailer built
- 8 new fence posts cut and installed
- 3 windows repaired and installed
- 258 55gal bags of invasive plants removed

Conclusions

Based on the information gathered from the 2015 season of the Maryland Conservation Jobs Corps, the five week summer employment program is making a positive impact on youth in Maryland in several key areas. CJC's high retention rate and number of third and fourth year returners is indicative of a program that is meaningful and beneficial to its Corps Members. Further indicative of positive youth development are CJC's achievements as they relate to the program's SPIRIT Principles. SPIRIT principles are CJC's central principles that stem from the program's mission and goals and assist in evaluating corps member and staff performance. With the vast majority of Corps Members improving in all areas of SPIRIT and average scores increasing from initial to final evaluations, the conclusion can be drawn that participation in the Maryland Conservation Jobs Corps fosters positive development in stewardship, professionalism, initiative, respect, integrity, and teamwork. It is CJC's hope that the development which occurs during the five weeks of the program will continue after graduation and will encourage Corps Members to be productive and happy adults. Additionally, the Maryland Conservation Jobs Corps also provides its Corps Members with an invaluable exposure to nature and outdoor recreation which is shown to create an affinity for nature among Corps Members. This is exemplified by youth through the increase in positive feelings towards nature, the desire to participate in environmentally friendly activities, and the enjoyment of outdoor recreation. Not only does CJC positively contribute to the lives of its Corps Members, but also positively contributes to the Maryland State Parks System. The State of Maryland is provided with an invaluable service by youth completing the conservation projects listed in this document. These necessary projects would have otherwise been contracted out to private companies or to park staff, which would have cost the state additional money and resources. With the dual purposes of youth development, conserving Maryland Public Lands, and ultimately conserving the Chesapeake Bay Watershed, the Maryland Conservation Jobs Corps is a positive and worthwhile program for the State of Maryland and the Maryland Department of Natural Resources.



2015 CJC Staff